

the likelihood is high of a double-dip recession. So the last thing we should be doing right now is wasting time, but that is what Republicans are forcing us to do.

Last night, a majority of the Senate voted to take up this bill. But Republicans will not put politics aside for a moment, even when the price of their stubbornness is struggling families and failing businesses.

I say it again: Democrats are not going to give up on creating jobs. We will introduce the American Jobs Act piece by piece.

I had two conversations last night while the vote was taking place with Republicans, and both Republican Senators said they would like to join in moving some pieces of this legislation. So we are going to do that, and I am glad to see there is some interest by my Republican colleagues in doing that.

Many of the ideas we will advance will be proposals Republicans have supported in the past, as I have already indicated. I think they will have to explain to the American people—at a time of record unemployment—why they continue to oppose job-creating tax cuts for small businesses and the middle class and other proposals they have supported in the past. So, as I said a minute ago, I look forward to working with my Republican colleagues in moving forward parts of this bill they like. At the end of the day, if they do not do this, their motive will be crystal clear: politics.

So I hope Republicans will be able to see past partisan posturing to support their own past proposals when we consider them individually in the next few weeks.

Take, for example, the payroll tax cut. My friend, the Republican leader, has supported payroll tax cuts in the past. Most Republicans have. This is what my friend, the Republican leader, said about the same tax cut in 2009. I quote:

It would put a lot of money back in the hands of businesses and in the hands of individuals. . . . Republicans, generally speaking, from Maine to Mississippi, like tax relief.

So that is part of the American Jobs Act.

Another Republican Senator sponsored a bill to give tax credits to businesses that hire out-of-work veterans. Yet that same Republican Senator voted against the same proposal last night. It was part of the bill last night.

Republicans have supported these proposals in the past. They should have supported them yesterday. But Democrats care so much about creating jobs that we will give our Republican colleagues another opportunity to do the right thing, and we will move forward in the best way we can to put these matters before the American people, if necessary, piece by piece.

#### TRADE AGREEMENTS

Mr. REID. Madam President, we have worked hard to be in the posture we

are in today to have votes on these trade bills. My friend, the Republican leader, has heard me say this too much, but I do not favor these bills. But a majority of this Senate does, and I believed it was important we move these forward. I have worked with the Republican leader to do it today. I think it is important to do it today. We have the President of Korea here in America. He is going to speak to a joint meeting of Congress tomorrow. I look forward to a very productive day in moving these matters forward.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### THE JOBS BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, before my friend, the majority leader, leaves the floor, let me remind him and our Senate colleagues and the American people that Republicans were prepared to vote on the President's second version of the stimulus bill last night. In fact, I offered a unanimous consent that we have that vote—not the motion to proceed to it but the actual vote. I am not going to renew that request at the moment but just would say to my friend, we are happy to have that vote. We were happy to have it last night.

With regard to the pieces of it, my friend is correct; some of the pieces of this second stimulus might well be appropriate. I have recommended to the joint select committee—that he and I appointed 50 percent of—that they take a look at some of the pieces of it which could well be included in a product we are going to get before Thanksgiving before the Senate and the House.

So, again, we would be happy to vote on the entire package. We were happy to do it last night and also happy to look at pieces of it. We do have, as the majority leader and I have discussed before, important work to do in the Senate. We have the trade agreements we are going to approve tonight. We have three appropriations bills we are going to go to after that—the basic work of government, which we have not done in the last few years, the American people would like to see us do. We also have a joint select committee set up that could look at parts of the proposal to which the majority leader is referring. So I have some optimism that we will be able to come together on pieces of it that we think make sense.

I will say that as far as I know, there is not a single Republican who thinks it is a good idea to raise taxes on over 300,000 business owners, which is what would happen under the so-called millionaires' surtax. So there are parts of it we very much disagree with. We have divided government. Neither party controls the entire government. We will only be able to pass those things we do

agree on. I think there are parts of the package my friend refers to that could well be agreed to at some point this year on a bipartisan basis.

#### FREE-TRADE AGREEMENTS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, later today the Senate will show that Democrats and Republicans can, in fact, work together to make it easier for American businesses to create jobs.

By passing free-trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea, we will help the economy, and we will put the lie to the ridiculous Obama campaign claim that Republicans are somehow rooting against the economy. Nothing could be more ridiculous and absurd as to suggest that Republicans are somehow rooting against our economy.

In fact, if President Obama were willing to work with us on a more bipartisan piece of legislation, nobody would even be talking about a dysfunctional Congress. There would not be any reason to.

But, as we all know, that does not fit in with the President's election strategy. The White House has made it clear that the President is praying for gridlock—he is actually hoping for gridlock—so he has somebody besides himself to point the finger at next November.

That is a big mistake. The American people will not tolerate their own President putting politics ahead of working with Congress on the kind of bipartisan legislation that we know both parties could agree on right now.

So this morning I would like to repeat my call to the President to put the political playbook aside and work with us instead on the kind of bipartisan, job-creating legislation the American people truly want.

The trade bills we will be voting on tonight are a good start. There is no reason we should have had to wait nearly 3 years for this President to send them to Congress for a vote, but they are a good start nonetheless—3 years late but still very important to do.

Now let's move on to some other things. We have pointed to areas such as regulatory reform, tax reform, and energy exploration where the parties could help create jobs without raising taxes or adding to the deficit.

It is just the kind of bipartisan cooperation that the American people are actually demanding from us, and what I am saying this morning is that Republicans are eager and willing to join Democrats in making that happen.

The Presidential election, for goodness' sake, is 13 months away; 13 months from now is the Presidential election. There is plenty of time to campaign. Why don't we put that off for a while and do what we were sent here to do?

But right now we have an opportunity to work together. Let's put aside the political playbook and focus